Dear Sir/Madam,

Over more than six decades after independence, the nations of South Asia remain caught up in a vicious cycle of poverty, deprivation, and underdevelopment. South Asia is home to a quarter of the world’s population, but has 43 per cent of the world’s poor and accounts for only 2 per cent of the world’s gross domestic product. South Asian countries are at the very bottom of the world league in social and human development indicators. Economic deprivation, illiteracy, and unemployment provide a fertile ground for intolerance and extremism, which in turn promote conflict and violence within our societies. The region has been racked by intolerance of virtually every kind - ethnic, communal, religious, and sectarian. Consequently, tensions abound within and between our peoples and frequently reinforce tensions between our countries. As a result, the inherited legacy of conflict persists, constraining each government’s ability to fulfill the social contract with its people.

South Asia is often described as the most dangerous place on earth. This region is facing both traditional and non traditional security threats and urgently needs to overcome the bitter legacies of the past in order to create an enabling environment for peace and security, which is critical to unleash the synergies necessary for economic progress. Since the end of the Cold War, the global pattern of conflict has shifted from inter-state to intra-state conflicts (many of which have transnational regional links), yet one of the remaining potential inter-state conflicts is found in South Asia. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the two potential belligerents are armed with nuclear-armed weapons. Most of the countries in South Asia also have insurgency movements.

Apart from this, South Asia is sandwiched between the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent, two of the largest drug-producing regions in the world, and there are clear connections between the trafficking in drugs and arms. South Asia is a conflict prone region subject to continuous political tensions. India, by far the largest country, and geographically centrally located, has developed differences with most of its smaller neighbours. The smaller countries have reflected this dissonance by pursuing policies to counter-balance India. They have cultivated extra-regional powers in support of their strategic goals and the interested external powers have exploited this regional strategic dissonance to promote their specific interests in the region and around.

Tentative sub-themes

- Non traditional security threats in South Asia
- Nuclear proliferation and security of South Asian States
- Terrorism, Ethnic Conflicts Drug Trafficking, Narco-terrorism, religious fundamentalism and Militarization of South Asia
- Conflict Resolution and Peace Building Processes in South Asia
- Indian Security Environment

Participants are requested to submit a paper through e-mail to Seminar Director before 30th December 2011.